

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please delete the word "SPECIFICATION" from the top of page 1, where it appears above the title.

Please amend paragraphs [001], [002], [008], [009], [011], [012], [013], [018], [020], [022], [023], [024], [030], [032], [043], [046], [047], [049], [052] [056], and [066] as shown below, in which deleted terms are shown with strikethrough and added terms are shown with underscoring.

Paragraph [001]

The present invention relates to a marine propulsion machine, such as an outboard motor having an outboard internal combustion engine, or an outboard/inboard motor having an inboard internal combustion engine. [[and,]] More particularly, the present invention relates to a gear case assembly with a pressure-compensating function, for a marine propulsion machine.

Paragraph [002]

Description of ~~the Related~~ Background Art

A gear case, forming a lower part of a marine propulsion machine, has a gear chamber formed therein for housing a bevel gear mechanism, used for transmitting power from a drive shaft to a propeller shaft. The gear case contains sufficient lubricating oil in the gear chamber to lubricate bearings, supporting a drive shaft, and other members that need lubrication. The gear case is sealed in a liquid-tight fashion to prevent the seepage of water into the gear case.

Paragraph [008]

The present invention has been made in view of the foregoing problems, and it is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an inexpensive gear case assembly with a pressure-compensating function for a marine propulsion machine, ~~consisting of~~ having a reduced number of parts, and capable of reducing ~~assembling man hours~~ the time required for assembly thereof.

Paragraph [009]

To achieve the above object, the present invention provides a gear case assembly with a pressure-compensating function, for use as a lower part of a marine propulsion machine. [, including:] A gear case assembly, according to a selected illustrative embodiment hereof, includes a gear case provided with a substantially vertical drive shaft receiving bore [[in which]] formed therein to receive a drive shaft. [[is supported for rotation,]] The gear case assembly hereof also has a gear chamber formed therein, which is connected to the lower end of the drive shaft receiving bore. [[and containing]] The gear case assembly hereof also includes a drive shaft, rotatably supported in the drive shaft receiving bore, a bevel gear mechanism for transmitting power from the drive shaft to a propeller shaft, and a forward/backward selector clutch mechanism, housed in the gear chamber. The gear case also has a shift rod receiving bore formed therein which is substantially parallel to the drive shaft receiving bore. [[, receiving]] A shift rod is supported in the shift rod receiving bore, for operating the forward/backward selector clutch mechanism. [[and having]] The shift rod receiving bore has an [[open]] upper end opening in an upper surface of the gear case, and the gear case also has a connecting hole formed therein, connecting an upper part of the drive shaft receiving bore and an upper part of the shift rod receiving bore. [[; and]] The gear case assembly hereof further includes a covering member attached to the upper surface of the gear case so as to cover the [[open]] upper end of the shift rod receiving bore, and this covering member is provided with an opening through which the shift rod is passed into the shift rod receiving bore. [[, and having]] The covering member includes a body part, and a pressure-compensating wall bulging upward from the body part. [[and defining]] The gear case and the covering member cooperate to define a pressure-compensating chamber.

Paragraph [011]

A space is utilized effectively for receiving the upward bulging pressure-compensating wall of the covering member covering the open upper end of the shift rod receiving bore to achieve the pressure-compensating function. Thus, the gear case assembly consists of a small number of parts that can be assembled [[by]] in a reduced number of man-hours, and can be manufactured at a comparatively low cost.

Paragraph [012]

[[Typically,]] The shift rod [[is of a type]] operates the selector clutch to select a forward drive mode or a backward drive mode when the [[same]] shift rod is turned. Since the shift rod turns about its axis, the shift rod does not move vertically relative to the covering member, and hence the gap between the shift rod and the covering member can be easily [[perfectly]] sealed.

Paragraph [013]

According to the present invention, the shift rod may be divided into an upper shift rod portion and a lower shift rod portion. [[, and]] An upper end part of the lower shift rod portion, extending through the covering member and projecting upwardly from the covering member, may be coupled with a lower end part of the upper shift rod portion. Division of the shift rod into the upper and the lower shift rod portions, and the upward projection of the upper end part of the lower shift rod portion from the covering member, facilitates work [[for]] in assembling the gear case assembly.

Paragraph [018]

Desirably, the upper surface of the covering member, excluding the upward bulging pressure-compensating wall, is flush with the upper end surface of the annular sealing member fitted in the inner cylindrical part of the covering member, and this extends to the peripheral edge of the covering member. The covering member may be provided with a pair of upward bulging pressure-compensating walls respectively defining pressure -compensating chambers, and separated from each other by a groove.

Paragraph [020]

Fig. 1 is a side elevational view of an outboard engine including a gear case provided with a drive shaft support structure in a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Paragraph [022]

Fig. 3 is a sectional detail view of a lower portion of the gear case shown in Fig. 1;

Paragraph [023]

Fig. 4 is a top view of the lower gear case portion shown in Fig. 3;

Paragraph [024]

Fig. 5 is a rear view of the lower gear case portion shown in Fig. 3;

Paragraph [030]

Fig. 11 is a sectional view of an upper essential part of the gear case shown in Fig. 2 3;

Paragraph [032]

Fig. 13 is a rear plan view of ~~a rear view of~~ a propeller shaft support member;

Paragraph [043]

An engine cover 13a covers at least an upper half part of the internal combustion engine 11. The engine body 10a has an under cover 13b covering a lower half part of the internal combustion engine 11. The engine body 10a defines the appearance of the outboard engine 10.[[.]] A gear case 15 is connected to the lower end of the extension case 14 of the engine body 10a.

Paragraph [046]

A bevel gear mechanism 22 and a forward/backward selector clutch mechanism 23 are ~~built~~ housed in the gear case 15. The rotation of the substantially vertical drive shaft 21 is transmitted through the bevel gear mechanism 22 to a substantially horizontal propeller shaft 24 to rotate a screw propeller 25 mounted on the propeller shaft 24.

Paragraph [047]

An upper shift rod 26₁ for operating the forward/backward selector clutch mechanism 23₁ is supported for rotation in front of the drive shaft 21 and parallel to the latter. The upper shift rod 26 is extended through the swivel shaft [[1]]6 between the mount case 12 and the gear case 15. A lower shift rod 27₁ coaxially coupled with the upper shift rod 26₁ is inserted in the gear case 15.

Paragraph [049]

Splash guards 17a and ~~an anti-cavitation~~ anti-cavitation plates 17b extend[[s]] sideways from the opposite side surfaces of an upper part of the gear case 15. The splash guards 17a are above the anti-cavitation plates 17b.

Paragraph [052]

The substantially vertically extending drive shaft receiving bore 15b, the gear chamber 15a joined to the lower end of the drive shaft receiving bore 15b, and the propeller shaft receiving bore 15c extended horizontally backward from the gear chamber 15a cooperate to form a substantially L-shaped hollow in the gear case 15.

Paragraph [056]

Referring to Fig. 4, the respective open upper ends of the drive shaft receiving bore 15b, the shift rod receiving bore 15d, the speed-measuring bore 15f, the suction passage 15g and the exhaust passage ~~14h~~ 15h open in the joining surface 19 represented by an area shaded with dots in Fig. 4, i.e., the upper end surface joined to the extension case 14, of the gear case 15. The open upper end of the drive shaft receiving bore 15b sinks slightly beneath the joining surface 19. The gear housing 18 of the gear case 15 has the open rear end.

Paragraph [066]

As shown in Figs. 6 and 7, the bearing fastening ring 38 has an outside circumference provided with an external thread 38a, a stellate inside surface 38b with which a tool engages, and a downward annular skirt 38c.